

How to Grow and Care for Crinum Lilies

Crinum will bloom best when they are provided with plenty of water and sun. The giant clumps of foliage make an imposing architectural statement in the garden. Some crinum lily mature at 3' wide, while others spread to 7' wide, so check planting widths for each variety. No single planting spacing works for all crinum, so just because it doesn't fill the space immediately, doesn't mean it won't do so soon.

Crinum lily bulbs should be planted so that the neck of the bulb is just above the soil. Drainage isn't important for most crinum lilies, in fact, most like moist to soggy soils. Crinums are typically winter hardy to zones 6 or 7 so planting in a container may make it easier to overwinter indoors or in a cold frame just above freezing if you are in a colder climate. Most crinums are large growers, so be sure your container is at least 3 x the width of the bulb. If your bulb is 2" wide, you'll need at least a 6" wide pot.

Crinum bulbs may need to settle for a season or two before you start seeing a lot of blooms but trust us, your patience will be rewarded!

Although relatively drought tolerant, crinum will flower to a greater degree when provided with plenty of water during the bloom period, typically mid-summer. During the fall or early winter, they may go dormant so refrain from watering if there is no new growth. Organically rich, well-drained soil will improve your crinum lilies chances at making through the winter.

Crinum are very heavy feeders, so plenty of organic fertilizer or compost applied any time. Unlike chemical fertilizers, the timing of the application of organic fertilizers is irrelevant since you are feeding the soil microbes and not the plant itself.

Crinum are beloved for their lily-like, fragrant flowers that can range from bell or trumpet shaped to a more arachnoid shape that emerge in clusters atop leafless stalks that can easily reach up to 2' – 5' tall (0.6 m. - 1.5 m.), depending on the variety. Flower colors are mostly pink, white, and red.

Crinum lilies love sunshine so be sure to plant in full sun or part sun, unless it's one of the varieties that prefer lightly filtered shade. In desert climates, they can benefit from some partial afternoon shade to avoid leaf scorch.

Crinum lilies make fantastic accent plants in any garden and are often used in small groupings or as border plants. They also have some resistance to salt so are often a favorite for gardeners in coastal areas.

Crinum lilies have a long tradition in the southern U.S. as a pass-along flower owing much to their resilience when dividing the offsets. You can dig and divide the bulbs when starting, or in full growth. The clumps and individual bulbs can get rather large, so digging and dividing the outermost bulbs of the clump is recommended, unless you have access to a backhoe.

Deer are the only serious problem of crinum lilies when they are well grown. If they are poorly grown, you may well experience garden pests including mealy bugs, slugs, and snails.

Crinum lilies contain alkaloids which can be toxic if ingested.